

**THE INVISIBLE MAGNET:
UNLOCKING DISCOVERY, ENCOUNTER AND INTERACTION.**

REFLECTION



(image) Research-by-design: Collage illustrating the different layers of a public building

PUBLIC BUILDING
GRADUATION STUDIO
AR3AP100 MSC 3/4 2022-23
P4 - ROSALIE GRANATA
5625939

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1. The relation between the graduation project topic, the master track and the master programme.

The master track of TU Delft encourages its students to develop creative and innovative building projects that use design as a means to deal with the technical, social and spatial challenges encountered in the built environment. The previously followed MSc1 studio of Urban Architecture (Back to School) focusses on designing a new addition to an already existing site. More specifically restructuring a particular urban site with the design of a new building, whilst maintaining selected parts of an existing building. Due to the nature of the exercise, the project is designed in close partnership with Building Technology. It motivates the student to appreciate the value of already used materials and be thoughtful about the addition of new ones.

Where this studio mainly emphasized the built environment, the MSc2 studio of Veldacademie revolves around the built environment's relation to people's well-being. This design-and-built studio joins students from different master studies at the faculty of Bouwkunde to create a multi-disciplinary design experience for its students. Seeing as this studio aims

to design for a specific community in Rotterdam, a major part of the studio comprises of research and fieldwork of this community. The students are asked to design a pavilion that they will build later. Because of the aim of this collaborative project, students learn more about different disciplines in the same field of knowledge and go through every step of a design project. From initial brainstorming to the configuration of the to-be-build elements to the actual opening event of the build pavilion.

The studio topic of Public Building focuses on the Commons as an overall condition that defines a community. More specifically in architecture, this idea of the Commons resulted in a deeper importance of whom to design for and what the impact of the design could be not only on the built environment but on the human environment too. The overarching aspect of the architecture master track that Public Building focusses on is designing for a multiplicity of people, for a specific community. In this case, the community in question is located in Friedrichshain, a district within Berlin. After the fall of the Wall, the doomed city of Berlin became Europe's unofficial cultural capital. To this day, the city continues to display and evoke contradictions, variations and

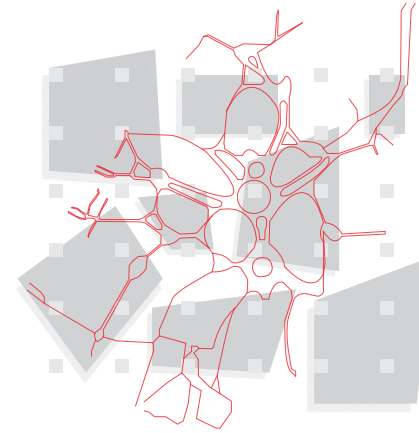
encounters within the vibrant identity of its Commons. For that reason, Berlin results in the ideal context to research a patchwork of communities and the notion of Commons in a city. The studio focusses on the area of Bezirksregion within Friedrichshain seeing as it is an area where profound changes have been occurring since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The student must then choose whom to design for and where the project will be located. In this project, the design answering the set of questions the studio poses, will revolve around bringing people together in an informal manner. The discovery of the project in the built environment of their own neighbourhood through the design of micro-moments will result in encounters and meetings between people of the community of Andreasviertel, one of the three neighbourhoods in the Bezirksregion.

2. The influence of the research on the design and visa versa.

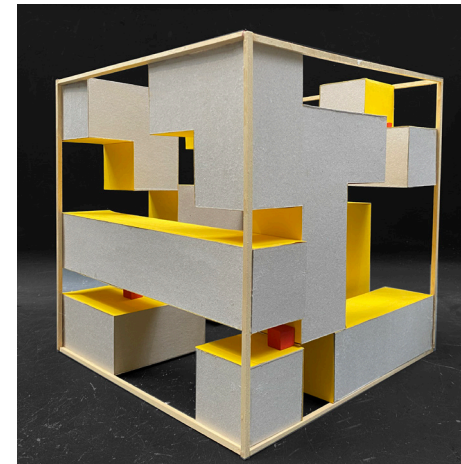
The methods used to state the problem and define the focus group of this project consist both of quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative research used to formulate the problem statement comprised of observations, interviews and case studies that explore different concepts and theories. The quantitative research revolved around numbers and data regarding the neighbourhood and its residents. To answer the formulated research question, literature and cases were analysed and studied to understand the significance and operation of urban acupuncture and how this theory could lead to encounters.

Together with this the core to the development of the Public Building graduation studio consist of Research-by-Design. The design of the project starts with conceptual framework showing the design intentions and ambitions of each student. Through various assignments early in the process, using different research-by-design methods, an individual Design Manifesto based on one's specific ambitions was formulated. One of the characteristics of this research method was researching

not only in a textual manner but for the largest part through the making of collages, diagrams, maps, models and many other imaginative and speculative research means with the aim of developing unique perceptual, ideational and synthetic abilities. The constant alternation and collaboration between theoretical research together with design-based research and the actual design resulted in various design loops, iterations and intersections, in a multiplicity of ideas and concepts. This research approach and design method helped to understand the project on different levels and gave a diverse overview of the design in its totality.



Research-by-design: diagram illustrating the context with the aim of positioning the project in the urban environment of Berlin.



Research-by-design: Assemblage illustrating two important aspects of the neighbourhood of Andreasviertel:

1. Hidden Architecture
2. In Between Space



Research-by-design: digital drawing illustrating how smaller interventions could connect a certain area and elevate the urban realm in terms of its use.

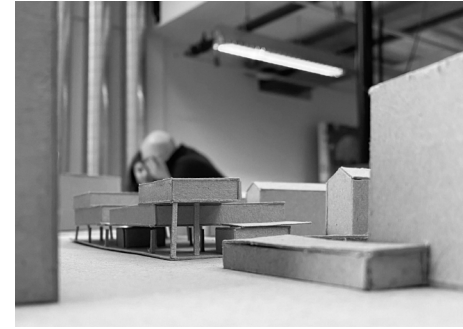
3. The value of the personal way of working in collaboration with the tutors.

The design process and research of the project comprise a combination of digital work as well as analogue work. Where digital work mainly focusses on the detailed design of the building, analogue work refers back to shaping the project with the help of models and sketches. Throughout the whole process, the making of physical models provided a way of researching the design on different scales and being able to physically see the project in its totality and in its urban context. The scale of the models ranged from 1:1000 and 1:500 on an urban level to 1:100 and 1:50 on the building level. The collaboration of models, impressions and diagrams resulted in a multi-layered approach to the design of the project. Overall, the personal way of working consisted of converting the results of the research into an actual design by using tools to help shape, form and configure the design that were mainly of a visual and tangible nature.

Since the feedback was provided by two tutors in both semesters, the students were encouraged to research and design the project in various ways and look at the problem from different angles. Where in the first

semester ir. Paul Kuitenbrouwer and dr. Stefano Corbo provided help and insight concerning respectively Project Design and Theory and Delineation, in the second semester Paul was accompanied by ir. Florian Eckardt contributing with his knowledge about Technical Building Design. Due to the tangibility and perceptibility of the design process, a close collaboration with the different tutors was possible which resulted in specific and helpful feedback on all aspects of the design.

Important to remember from this approach is the value of designing and researching the project by using actual handmade models and sketches in this rapidly digitalised world. The insights resulting from the configuration of volumes or materials in physical models will be of different nature than the digitally drawn 3D model. The strength of this approach lies in the multi-layered design process created by the combination of modern design tools together with the seemingly more old-fashioned design tools.



*1/1000 model
illustrates position of
volumes in the site*



*impression
illustrating discovery
on the ground floor*



*impression
illustrating interior
atmosphere*



*1/500 model
illustrating
fragmentation of the
design*

4. Relation between the project and the context

The neighbourhood of Andreasviertel is in need of a public condenser that encourages encounters on different scales. Although the scale of the building is still necessary and relevant, small-scale interventions in the public realm are of high importance as well. This theory of urban acupuncture was first introduced by the Barcelona architect Manuel de Solà-Morales. The Dutch architecture critic Hans Ibelings (2008) describes his methods as "... interventions at points where there is little energy, if any at all. His interventions unleash a heightened potential: the possibility of urbanity" (p11)¹.

The public condenser aims to stimulate interaction and engagement, to use the space in between the buildings as well as the in-between space in the actual building, which would reflect the configuration of the built environment of the area, to stimulate informal and unplanned meetings or activities. This project will research in what way urban acupuncture in combination with a building can initiate and encourage encounters between the residents. Together with this, the smaller-scale urban interventions could show a hint of the public condenser that is hidden

in between the existing buildings for the community of Andreasviertel to discover and encounter. Furthermore, the informal use of in-between space in the building creates opportunities for the functions to change over time.

5. Meaning of Multiplicity in the design.

The term Multiplicity has multiple interpretations throughout different disciplines. Therefore, it is important to define this term in the context of this project to be able to understand its importance. Multiplicity in architecture can be understood as the multi-layered way in which all of the architectural elements function. Each of the elements influences a multitude of domains, as well as each other. The most important aspect of multiplicity in this case is shaped by the connections between the elements themselves, the context and the environment. The change in an element or design aspect creates a rippling effect through the close-knit network of all of the components of the design and influences more than just one layer of the project. Accordingly, the origin of these design facets can never be one of singular nature. In this project, the meaning of multiplicity can be found in the multi-faceted manner in which all of the design decisions were made,

hence resulting in design components that perform in a multitude of ways. The meaning and importance of multiplicity in this project is the way in which the design is not just designed based on its function but connects functionality, contextuality, climate, social interaction, fragmentation and many other aspects in one design. Thus, hopefully resulting in a more adaptable and multipurpose design.

6. The academic and societal relevance, scope and implication of the graduation project, including ethical aspects and the value of the transferability of the project results.

The project revolves around counteracting loneliness and improving the social well-being of a community living in a rapidly gentrifying area. The consequences of gentrification, whether they are negative or positive, are not something unique to the district of Friedrichshain or Berlin in its totality. Gentrification is a broad phenomenon, expressed in various ways in various places all around the world. Therefore, this academic project could provide a possible answer to how several interventions on different scales could encourage interactions and encounters in a neighbourhood afflicted by loneliness and separation. The approach of urban acupuncture

and the design of different moments throughout the urban fabric could thus be seen as transferable to other communities and neighbourhoods that struggle with similar consequences of gentrification. It could illustrate a system of micro-moments carefully placed in an existing environment that results in the uplifting of a community.

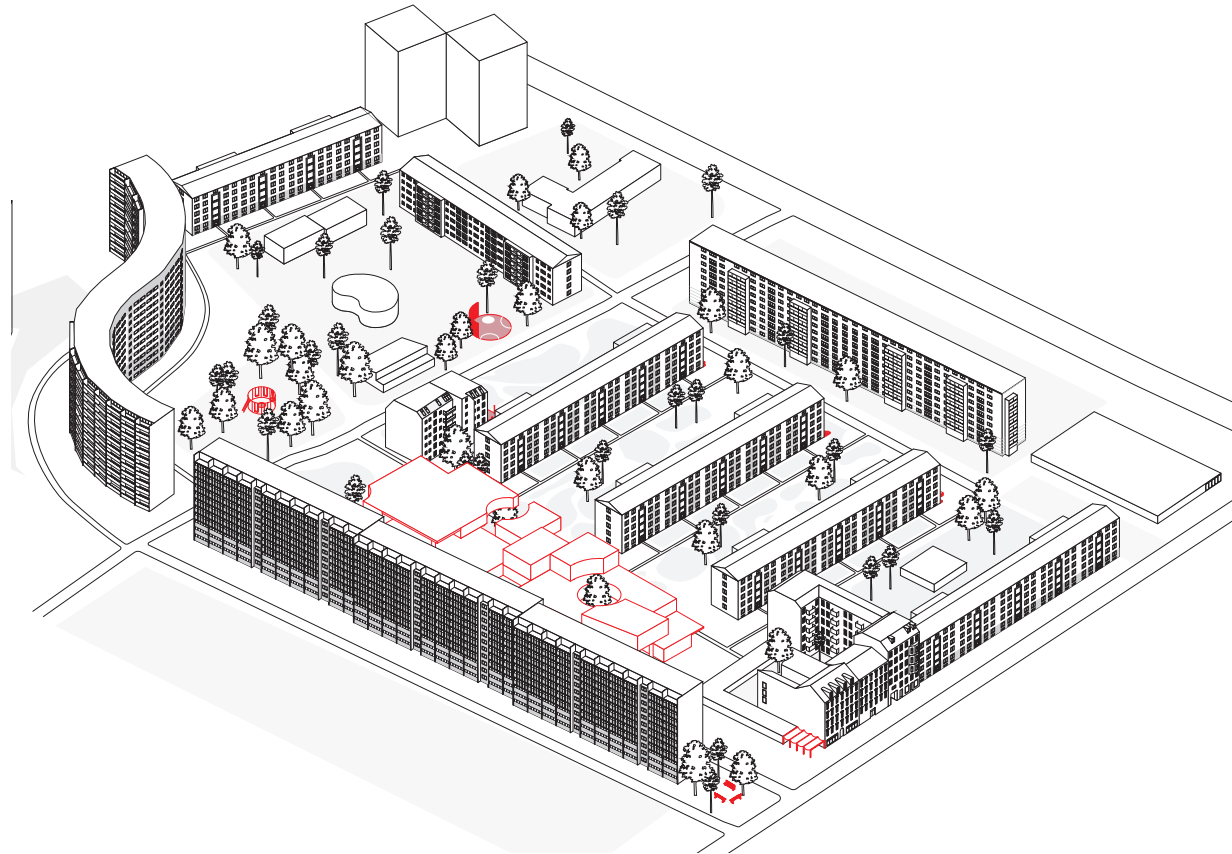
The relevance of this graduation project is the importance of not only looking at the building or structure itself and the effect it could have on the built and human environment but looking at a neighbourhood as a whole. Small interventions throughout the urban fabric prepare the community for a new addition to their neighbourhood and in the future could link a whole area and multiplicity of inhabitants to spaces designed to encourage interaction.

1 "URBAN ACUPUNCTURE: MANUEL DE SOLA-MORALES," Adam Parsons, last modified on December 4, 2010, <http://adam-parsonsdessignthesis.blogspot.com/2010/12/urban-acupuncture-manuel-de-sola.html>

2 "Public Condenser | New Urban Lounge & Commons," AR3AP100 Public Building Graduation Studio 2022-23, published September 2022

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(image) isometric drawing showing the public condenser in its totality. The small scale interventions together with the fragmented design of the building in the context of Andreasviertel.

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